

RED DEER ADVOCATE

Buffalo Lake tap turned off — for now

By **BRENDA KOSSOWAN**
Advocate staff

Pumping is stalled at Buffalo Lake while landowners scrap with the water management team.

Now into its second year of pumping, the Buffalo Lake Water Management Project is expected to create flooding potential on 72 separate parcels of land alongside the lake.

The project, funded by the Public Lands Department, is supposed to stabilize water levels in the lake by pumping water from the Red Deer River via

Parlby Creek.

Angus Braseth, chairman of the Buffalo Lake Management Team, said the stabilization project has made it necessary to purchase the land, because there is a chance it could flood. Only 61 of the landowners have signed purchase agreements. The 11 remaining have refused, Braseth said Thursday.

Six of them have started legal inquiries, including a demand that no pumping take place, he said.

Braseth said he could not comment about the stall because of the legal pro-

ceedings now under way.

But he did say pumping is expected to begin shortly.

"It's an unpleasant situation. It will be resolved, one way or another," said Braseth.

Pumping began last spring and has reached target levels set out in the stabilization plan, he said.

A manufacturer's defect in the main pump forced the management team to use the smaller, auxiliary pump throughout the season last year.

The main pump, capable of twice the work of its smaller partner, has been

repaired and is now ready for testing.

Braseth said he is anxious to start the pump up, to ensure that it is working properly.

The Buffalo Lake Management Team was established when Peter Lougheed was premier, and set in motion under his successor, Don Getty. Alberta Environmental Protection provided \$9.5 million in funding for the project.

Buffalo Lake lies between Erskine and Bashaw.

Water levels in the lake have been declining since 1910.